PARADISE: A POEM

—Samuel Menashe

AUG 6 '58

St. Charles Seminary Library
Carthagena, Ohio

THE

Commonweal

Under Fire

REGULATORY AGENCIES

by Donald P. Kommers

Twelve Years Later

CONVERSATION IN VIENNA

by John A. Lukacs

Man with Man

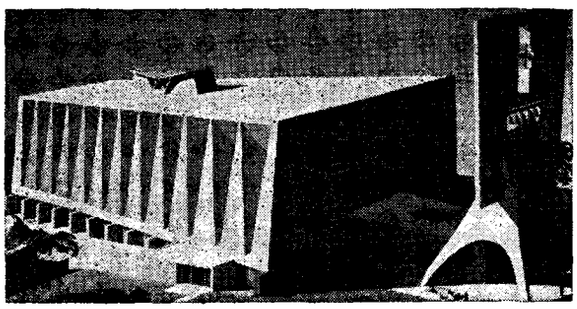
BUBER'S PURSUIT OF THE HOLY

by Bernard G. Murchland

olume LXVIII, No. 19 August 8, 1958 Twenty-Five Cents

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

SAINT JOHN'S
UNIVERSITY
Collegeville, Minnesota
Established 1857



Architect's model of new
St. John's Abbey Church and University Chapel

Conducted by the Benedictine Fathers
of
St. John's Abbey

†

The Saint John's Preparatory School

†

The College of Arts and Sciences, a four-year liberal arts college. Preprofessional programs, secondary teacher education, and art.

†

The School of Divinity under the auspices of St. John's Abbey and the Diocese of St. Cloud.

†

For complete information write to
The Registrar

St. John's University
Collegeville, Minnesota

THIS WEEK

Week by Week 459

Regulatory Agencies Under Fire
by Donald P. Kommers 463

Paradise: After Giovanni di Paolo: A Poem
by Samuel Menashe 465

Conversation in Vienna
by John A. Lukacs 466

The Innocent Years
by John Cogley 468

Buber's Pursuit of the Holy
by Bernard G. Murchland 469

The Screen
by Philip T. Hartung 472

Communications 473

Books 475

THE COMMONWEAL
386 FOURTH AVENUE
NEW YORK 16

Editor
EDWARD S. SKILLIN

Managing Editor
JAMES O'GARA

Associate Editors
JAMES FINN
RICHARD HORCHLER

Contributing Editors
JOHN C. CORT
ANNE FREMANTLE
PHILIP T. HARTUNG
RICHARD HAYES

JOHN BRUBAKER *Advertising Manager*

Entered as second-class matter at the post office at Orange, Conn., under the act of March 3, 1879. Published weekly and printed in the U. S. A. by the Commonweal Publishing Co., Inc., 386 Fourth Ave., New York 16, N.Y. MUrray Hill 3-9685.

Copyright © 1958 The Commonweal Publishing Co., Inc.
U. S. and Canada, $8 a year, Foreign, $10. Single copies 25¢

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE
Commonweal
A Weekly Review of Public Affairs, Literature, and the Arts
THIRTY-FOURTH YEAR OF PUBLICATION

week by week

ARAB NATIONALISM

IT COULD HARDLY be called a policy, but there are certain things that can be said in defense of our recent course in the Middle East. The successful revolt in Iraq, with its brutal assassinations, itself seals the verdict against this course and provides a vantage point for a rather general scrutiny. It was only natural for the United States to seek for allies everywhere in the common defense against the expanding, aggressive, Soviet postwar empire. A Middle East which the Russians had been seeking in vain to penetrate, an area of primary strategic importance upon which Western Europe was dependent for its oil, was an obvious place to seek to build up joint defenses.

But the common danger of Communism meant little to the downtrodden peoples moved by ardent aspirations of their own—for bread, liberation from Western imperialism and from corrupt ruling classes which paid little heed to their abysmal condition. Whatever aid was proferred by the West was tarred not only with connotations of the cold war—which these people felt was not their battle—but also seemed to be a component part of the imperialism which the Arabs now regard as their principal enemy. With shaky rulers in the saddle and resentful peoples eager to sweep away every vestige of Western domination, including artificial boundaries set up after the two world wars, the Arab Middle East proved to be the most unpropitious place to secure firm allies in the battle against Communism. And in misjudging the situation badly we have played into Soviet hands.

Arab nationalism has now reached the stage where its surge can not possibly be reversed. There was undoubtedly a moment in late 1956 when its self-appointed spokesman, Colonel Nasser, might have been effectively checked by British, French and Israeli armed forces, but the United States remained true to its idealism and thwarted that attempt. That was the last chance to call a halt to the steady rise of Colonel Nasser's power, by fair means or foul.

BUT HAVE NOT the American people been in sympathy with national self-determination for others all along? Do we not consistently encourage colonial peoples in their struggle for freedom? We do, but in this instance these aspirations seemed of much less moment than the support of the "Three Kings" in the free world's vital defense against Communism.

In any case, Arab nationalism has proved itself to be a dynamic force tending to unite in a single federation most of the countries in the Arab world. Would this in itself constitute a calamity from the American point of view? If the oilfields of the Middle East should all come into the possession of a single, united, neutralist Arab state, would the jig necessarily be up? Doubtless the oil would continue to flow to Western Europe, the principal present and only conceivable market for a commodity whose sales would supply the core of the whole Arab economy. There seems to be little point—indeed great danger—in impeding further what has come to be an almost irresistible force.

That this force is personified in Colonel Nasser greatly compounds the difficulty. For one thing his Cairo radio has been engaged for fourteen months in a most inflammatory cold war of its own. It has insistently and in so many words called for regicides and assassinations, if not massacres; it has constantly incited to violence highly emotional peoples already deeply resentful of their wretched, servile state. The little which Nasser has accomplished to alleviate the poverty of his own Egyptian people must be measured against his wholesale

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

propaganda. But on occasion the United States itself has been guilty of exerting pressure on him by withholding supplies that were greatly needed. Intent on our own cause, we dealt with the leaders in the Middle East simply as enemies or friends in the struggle against Communism.

Dictators are rarely popular in this country, but Colonel Nasser is clearly the unchallenged spokesman for the Arab world. A policy of encouraging Arab nationalism, not only in general but by specific economic and political measures, inevitably means seeking agreements with him. We actually have no choice. And if Arab nationalists seem diffident toward a common defense against the march of Communism, they are not in the least desirous of playing Russia's game. The danger is that in turning to the Soviet Union for economic, political and military help against the remnants of "imperialism," they will become dependencies or satellites—foreign as this would be to their aspirations for full independence. Moreover, a wholeheartedly friendly attitude on our part toward this Arab development involves the only chance of preventing a resumption of armed hostilities with Israel, which would endanger the peace of the whole world.

It is time for a change in our approach to the peoples of the Middle East.

RETURN TO THE SUMMIT?

IT NOW SEEMS that the summit meeting, so long in the offing, may finally take place. And, for most observers, the images of the major participants have become firmly fixed. In spite of some inconsistencies of declaration, Russia is seen as the vigorous proponent of the meeting; the United States is going slowly, reluctantly, pessimistically; England, more willing than the United States, is able to muster some show of optimism; and France, in the person of Charles de Gaulle, looks forward to representing Western European countries.

Before the 1955 summit conference at Geneva, we expressed serious doubts about the outcome of such a meeting—doubts which were only too thoroughly confirmed by subsequent events. Before the Middle East crisis, conditions had changed sufficiently so that the prospect of a summit meeting once again appealed to many people in various countries. Although a reluctance to attend such a meeting inevitably placed the United States in the familiar, negative position so open to criticism, the reluctance was justified by the lack of real expectations. Discussion between countries may be desirable, but that power which determines and controls situations is not going to be openly exchanged across a conference table merely because it is surrounded by heads of governments. A summit meeting is a place for public statements, for the most favorable interpretation each country can make of its own actions. Such statements are not to be underestimated. They can be meaningful—if they are made after a settlement or course of action has been determined. But such a settlement can only, will only, take place apart from the glare of public exposure. Now, however, the Middle East crisis has allowed Mr. Khrushchev to propose—and haggle over—a summit meeting at which he can pose as a great peacemaker.

We therefore anticipate the summit meeting with small expectation and little enthusiasm. At this juncture it may be better that a conference take place than not, for the intervention in the Middle East, however it is justified, has placed the U.S. in such a critical position that a refusal to join in discussion, even under undesirable conditions, might well be more damaging than an unsuccessful summit conference.

Since circumstances, for which the Western powers are partly responsible, have combined to force the conference, it is senseless to waste time in idle regrets. But it may not be too late for the West to formulate, at this tardy date, a policy for the Middle East which contains concrete measures that will withstand the pressures of the future as well as immediate harsh criticism. The problems themselves are clear; they have been for years. The problems stem from the pressures of Communist interest in and penetration of the Middle East; from Arab nationalism and Nasser imperialism, which may overlap but which can be distinguished; from the mutual dependence of Europe and the Arab countries on the export of oil; and from Arab-Israeli relations. This is the large context in which the present crisis should be discussed. The summit meeting will reveal to all that the West has a consistent, developed policy which can contain and accommodate these issues, or it will confirm the makeshift policy which has, apparently, been ours to date.

EXPLORER IV

THE SUCCESSFUL launching of Explorer IV, the fourth United States satellite to be placed in orbit, is a source of satisfaction to every American.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Our new moon is the heaviest we have sent aloft—38.43 pounds; it was placed in a precisely selected, difficult orbit; it contains an array of highly sophisticated recording instruments; and it is expected to journey through space for several years to come.

Nevertheless, our satisfaction in this latest scientific feat must be tempered by the fact of previous and superior Russian achievements, especially that of Sputnik III, still wheeling its incredible 2,925 pounds about the globe. What this gigantic space-vehicle means, in terms of basic rocket power, control equipment and general technological proficiency, has not been contradicted by our relatively puny Explorer IV—and the relatively puny rocket needed to thrust it into space.

There is no reason to think that the United States will not develop a rocket—fairly soon—to equal the one now possessed by the Soviets. In the meantime, there is this to think about: Soviet Russia has the power to launch intercontinental missiles; the United States has not.

TRADE WARS

ANOTHER THREAT from behind the Iron Curtain is making itself felt with increasing force. Productivity of certain commodities for export in the Soviet Union and Communist China has reached the point that both countries are seriously competing with the free nations in world markets. As their goods are produced under cheap, or even forced, labor conditions, costs are low; and if necessary to get the business, products are offered at a loss, at least for a considerable period. Here is another challenge of wide proportions confronting the free world.

China's trade drive in Southeast Asia supplies a striking example. It is offering an ever-increasing list of commodities at prices and credit terms that no other exporting country can match. The Bank of China, with its voluminous mail-order catalogue, is the principal agency involved. The immediate object is said to be enough foreign exchange to secure the matériel required for further Chinese industrialization. As a result of this effort, countries which have been compensating for Japan's loss of its China trade are now themselves providing seriously shrinking markets. It appears inescapable that the United States respond to this blow to our strongest ally in the Far East by providing an expanding market for Japanese textiles and other goods. And this is only one of the many steps that the Russian and Chinese trade offensives make increasingly imperative for the free world.

DR. NKRUMAH OF GHANA

AS PRIME Minister of the new African state of Ghana, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, is, of course, a very welcome visitor to the United States. That his views are important to us and that Ghana has interests in common with the United States are both evident in the joint statement which was put forth by Dr. Nkrumah and President Eisenhower. This much, however, could be said of many national leaders who are friendly with the United States. Kwame Nkrumah is a case apart. The circumstances attending his life and present position mark him as a person of particular importance to Americans. It is not that he told us, during his visit, anything we had not already known. It is that he symbolized significant aspects of our national past, as well as those crucial issues of civil rights that are now upon us, and a future that becomes ever clearer.

Dr. Nkrumah received his schooling at a Catholic mission in British West Africa, at Lincoln College in Oxford, Pa., at the University of Pennsylvania, and at the London School of Economics. During a vacation from Lincoln College he sold fish on a Harlem street corner, but, after losing his money, was led to sleep in a subway and to listen to street orators for entertainment. He is familiar, thus, with various aspects of life in America; with our ideals, our aspirations and our failings; with the best of Western tradition and with the plight of the American Negro. Even his rise to eminence—which is not quite a "rags to riches" story—parallels one of the most insistent and basic American dreams.

When Dr. Nkrumah addressed the Senate and the House he focused, merely by his presence, both domestic and foreign issues now confronting this country. He spoke as a friendly leader of an independent African state, yet many who represent the leadership of our Southern states were significantly absent. They could not acknowledge that Dr. Nkrumah had anything to say to them—because he is a Negro. That injustice which has for so long eroded our national life would not give way to international issues, even where self-interest and prudence, as well as friendship, would have dictated that it do so.

Nor, although Ghana is a small, still developing country, should we underestimate the importance

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of Dr. Nkrumah's stands. As Ralph J. Bunche, Undersecretary of the U.N., said: "Ghana is the first but by no means the last state in Africa south of the Sahara to be emancipated from colonialism." During a time that is marked by forces of nationalism, anti-colonialism and revolution, the leader of Ghana is an important spokesman. When he says that "the United States and other nations fighting for freedom are the bulwarks for that freedom," the words have a different ring to Afro-Asian peoples than they would if spoken by our State Department. As the peoples of the vast continent of Africa assume greater independence they will exert more influence upon world affairs. Their interests will not, of course, always coincide with ours. There will, inevitably, be differences. But these differences will be the more readily reconciled as they are seen within a framework of common understanding and sympathy. Dr. Nkrumah, firmly of his own country but with intimate knowledge of ours, is peculiarly equipped to develop the desirable bonds.

AND CURIOUSER

IF WE DIDN'T know better we might say "Now we've seen everything," about Representative Francis E. Walter's accusation that the director of the United States Passport Office is "going out of her way" to obey the recent Supreme Court ruling on passports.

Mr. Walter, Chairman of the House Committee on Un-American Activities, has written a letter directly to Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, charging that Passport Office director Frances E. Knight issued passports to "outstanding Communist agents or espionage suspects" before the high court decision had become "effective." Representative Walter cited the fact that he and some other Congressman had introduced legislation to overturn the Supreme Court ruling (that passports could not be denied simply because of the applicant's beliefs or associations) and implied that Miss Knight should not have followed a Supreme Court decision which he didn't like and which he hoped to nullify by means of special legislation.

Miss Knight's decision was, of course, merely routine. While Supreme Court rulings become official in twenty-five days, if there is no petition for a rehearing, Miss Knight was advised that the Justice Department would not seek a rehearing of the June 16 ruling. A week later, accordingly, she notified the lawyers for Rockwell Kent and the others affected by the ruling that their applications for passports would not be held up further.

The Alice in Wonderland charge that Miss Knight went "out of her way" to obey the law might seem only funny if it were not for the reaction it has provoked. State Department officials have treated Mr. Walter's accusations with complete solemnity, finding it necessary to defend Miss Knight and to offer elaborate explanations of the administrative procedure which she followed. Mr. Dulles has apparently not yet replied to Representative Walter's letter, but he is counted on by State Department spokesmen to defend Miss Knight against the accusations.

The power wielded by Mr. Walter and his committee, as demonstrated even in this latest case, when the accusations and innuendoes are so palpably absurd, cannot be dismissed as a laughing matter. It is all too serious.

PENTAGON REORGANIZATION

THE PENTAGON REORGANIZATION bill, at this writing, has been approved by a joint Congressional conference committee, which worked out differences between the Senate and House versions, and is now expected to be passed without delay.

The revised bill emphatically rebuffs President Eisenhower on a number of provisions which he earlier described as vitally important and for which he fought long and hard. The President lost out in his attempt to forbid service secretaries and the Joint Chiefs to bring complaints and recommendations to Congress "on their own initiative." The President had denounced this procedure as "legalized insubordination." Other points on which Mr. Eisenhower was thwarted have to do with authorizing the Secretay of Defense to merge, transfer or abolish traditional service functions without Congressional restraint and asserting the Defense Secretary's direct command over the individual services.

We think Congress was wise in being wary of these further concentrations of power and in retaining its traditional control over military policies. The President's own response to this Congressional action, in view of his determined opposition a short time ago, is magnanimous, perhaps, but hard to understand. Mr. Eisenhower says that the differences between him and Congress were, after all, "relatively minor" and the bill "adequately meets every recommendation I submitted to the Congress on this subject."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Regulatory Agencies Under Fire

Recent events suggest that these agencies are not wholly independent, and to that extent impartiality is damaged and the public interest sacrificed

By DONALD P. KOMMERS

THE WIDE PUBLICITY given to the current Congressional investigations of the "independent" regulatory commissions suggests that a brief commentary as to their origin, role, and justification in the American political process might be in order.

The first federal regulatory commission was established by the Interstate Commerce Act in 1887. Prior to that date twenty-five separate state railway commissions were already functioning, but because of the inability of the state commissions to cope with the monopolistic practices of the railroad barons, machinery was adopted at the national level to handle what was then a serious national problem.

The basic justification of the regulatory commission is its independence. There would be nothing highly irregular about incorporating the specialized functions of the commissions into the executive departments, for instance. But the department is headed by a secretary who is politically responsible to the President for his acts and who may be summarily discharged by the latter. The primary responsibility of the department, furthermore, is the administration of government programs and the implementation of Presidential policy directives.

The independent commission, on the other hand, is a multi-headed agency entrusted with a Congressional mandate to make policy decisions within a specialized area, regardless of the policy orientation of the President. This independence is designed to ensure a continuity of policy, as opposed to the lack of administrative responsibility which is likely when the reins of governmental power shift from party to party. Moreover, the President is not ordinarily permitted to remove commissioners except for causes outlined in the law.

Mr. Kommers, a member of the faculty of the University of Wisconsin, makes his first appearance in The Commonweal with this article.

One of the most important agencies, the Interstate Commerce Commission is empowered by statute to maintain reasonable and nondiscriminatory rates in interstate transportation, establish through routes and joint rates, compel insurance policies and surety bonds to "insure payment of a potential decision against the carrier," etc. The Federal Trade Commission is empowered to issue cease and desist orders breaking up monopolies and unfair trade practices in the maintenance of free competitive enterprise. The Federal Communications Commission, currently the subject of heated controversy, is charged with regulating interstate communication for the purpose of providing and encouraging a "rapid, efficient, nationwide . . . communication service." Hence the F.C.C. supervises the rates and services of interstate telephone and telegraph companies, allocates frequencies, authorizes radio and television licenses, etc. The only standard governing the conduct of the F.C.C. in discharging these momentous responsibilities is that it be in conformity with the "public interest," "convenience," and/or "necessity."

The other three great regulatory commissions which round out the Big Six currently undergoing Congressional investigation are the Federal Power Commission, the Security and Exchange Commission, and the Civil Aeronautics Board.

GIVEN THE nature of their functions and the discretionary power to decide specific questions in the context of Congressional standards, it is obvious that these commissions are capable of making policy decisions affecting entire industries. Because of the magnitude of these decisions and because they are so closely tied in with the public welfare, it was the design of Congress to render the commissions free of political influence for the purpose of fostering impartiality.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Necessity, too, as well as the moral factor, demanded an institution equipped to handle the ever-changing problems of a dynamic economy which Congress has neither the competence nor the time to handle. Acts of Congress governing interstate commerce, for example, cannot lay down rules for every contingency which may arise under the law. All that Congress is capable of doing is to outline broad policy objectives and the general standards to be applied in the implementation of these objectives. Law without the necessary machinery of implementation, however, is abortive and without coercive effect. Hence Congress has delegated certain quasi-judicial, administrative, and legislative authority to commissions, the members of which, presumably, are selected for their competence to handle specialized functions.

The assumption, then, is that independence is a necessary ingredient to the impartial performance of commission activity. Agency independence is here taken to mean not only freedom from political control, but also freedom from industry control, which is all too readily assumed. But the question which must be posed on further examination, especially in the light of the current investigations, is whether the independence of the regulatory commissions is in reality a fact. Recent events suggest that they are not wholly independent, and to that extent impartiality is impaired and the public interest sacrificed. One may further query whether the structure of the regulatory agency does, indeed, lend itself to impartiality in its dealings with private business.

It is frequently objected that the commingling of legislative and judicial functions constitutes an internal inconsistency acting against impartiality. Fusing the functions of prosecutor and judge in the same person or agency naturally runs against our grain. It is said, and perhaps justly, that an agency which uses its legislative functions to make rules and decide findings of fact is, in its judicial function, not going to be easily disposed to render a final judgment against itself.

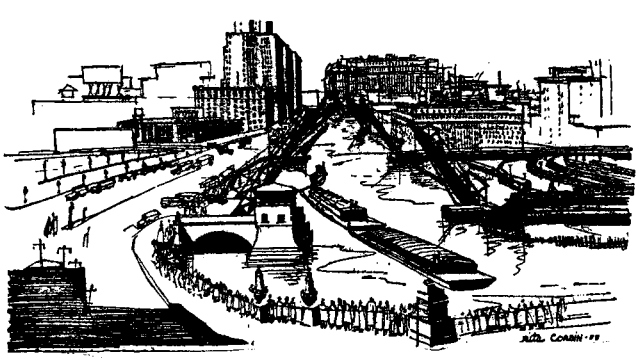
CERTAINLY, the regulatory commission is not an autonomous unit. A commission acts independently only so far as it executes its functions with dispassion and objectivity, and the controls or checks upon its powers, although indirect, are many. It has only those powers conferred by Congress with the concurrence of the President. In addition, its flow of funds is controlled by Congressional appropriations. The President appoints the members of the commissions, who must then be approved by the Senate. In addition, final decisions of the commissions may be reviewed by the courts. (A very recent example of judicial review occurred May 19 when the high court set aside a decision of the I.C.C. increasing railroad freight rates within Utah to meet interstate rates.) Finally, Congress has the right and the duty to see to it that the commissions are acting within the law.

The independence of the commission from the executive is more pronounced, however, since the President's removal powers are often curtailed. Moreover, the terms of the commissioners are staggered and longer than the President's term so that the possibility of stacking a commission with men of the President's political orientation—at least within a single term—is lessened. Also, the President cannot review or veto final decisions of the regulatory agencies. Any influence he may possibly exercise will be informal, as no formal means of communication exist between him and the agencies.

Perhaps the greatest danger threatening the independence and impartiality of the regulatory commissions today is their tendency to acquire the orientation of the businesses they regulate. When the agencies were first formed to wrestle with specific problems and remove the evils within their assigned areas, they were vehicles of imaginative planning and were known to have aggressively pushed for their policies in and out of legislative halls.

But the dust has settled. Through the years the agencies, consciously or unconsciously, have established a clientele which has a vested interest in their continued existence. A history of any well-established regulatory agency reveals an evolutionary trend tending to narrow the controversy between regulator and regulated. The inevitable result is the establishment of a kind of informal and subtle rapport, somewhat difficult to tabulate, but nevertheless present and operative. This thesis is borne out by the firm resistance of regulated industries to government reorganization plans which would divest the commissions of their authority by shifting their prerogatives to an executive department.

For instance, the 1949 Hoover Task Force Report on Regulatory Commissions recommended to the Commission on Organization of the Executive Branch of the Government that the I.C.C. be partially dismantled for the purpose of redelegating its activity to the Commerce Department. This recommendation was vigorously opposed by the Association of American Railroads,



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

which expressed its profound satisfaction with I.C.C. proceedings.

And a short time ago, in Milwaukee, three natural gas companies were indicted under the Sherman Anti-trust Act with conspiring to monopolize the natural gas market in Wisconsin, Minnesota, Illinois, and Michigan. The President of the American Natural Gas Company, a co-defendant, said that the question was already before the Federal Power Commission and should therefore be immune from the anti-trust proceedings initiated by the Justice Department. This is a jurisdictional problem which the courts must decide, but the point emphasized here is that the Natural Gas companies feel the F.P.C. is a much more favorable forum in which to take their litigation than the federal courts. The anti-trust lawyers of the Justice Department have long suspected that the F.P.C. is not effectively enforcing the provisions of the anti-trust laws against the gas companies.

A RECENT STUDY, *Regulating Business by Independent Commissions,* by Marver H. Bernstein, advances the thesis that the independent commissions, in the absence of the emergencies which gave them life, tend to solidify their relationships and become spokesmen for the status quo. The record of the F.C.C. investigation has disclosed the questionable relationship of this agency to the television industry.

Perhaps this tendency of the regulator to orient himself to the regulated is inevitable under present circumstances. In the main, the men selected for membership on the commissions are chosen for their particular knowledge of the problems affecting a given industry. Their competence in and familiarity with specific industrial problems is presumably due to previous associations, in one way or another, with the industry in question. Such an orientation, of course, need not inhibit one from conducting commission proceedings with impartiality, and often it does not. Nevertheless, a certain amount of deference to industry is natural under these circumstances. At any rate, the great defect of the commission today is not the abuse or the over-exercise of power, but rather a reluctance to exercise the plenitude of its delegated power.

But despite these criticisms and acknowledged deficiencies, one is inclined to accept the judgment of the Hoover Commission that "independent regulatory commissions have a proper place in the machinery of our government." Few question the necessity today for a regulated economy. The extensive benefits and vast potential of an immense and dynamic economy must be directed to the common good. Direction and control are designed not to stifle free enterprise but to encourage and maintain it by imposing sanctions upon those who would limit its benefits and growth in order to aggrandize themselves and their economic positions. To accomplish this end, impartiality in regulating the activities of private business is essential. It has been the consensus of Congress that the regulatory agency, independent of executive political control, is best suited to achieve this purpose.

Yet the independent status of the commission, as illustrated, is itself no guarantee against corruption and influence-peddling.

Governmental institutions are susceptible to maladministration if the administrators fail to exercise sufficient self-restraint and if the public fails to keep a watchful eye upon their activities. Certainly the public is not without sufficient guarantees against abuses in the agencies designed for its protection, but all the institutional controls available should be invoked to see that the commissions are discharging their duties according to the intent of Congress. And Congress should invoke its investigatory powers as often as possible.

On the positive side, Congress might grant the agencies additional staff help and research facilities and pay commissioners higher salaries. These measures would tend to weaken present relationships between regulator and regulated and frustrate attempts at "mutual understandings." If necessary Congress should clarify and tighten the standards now governing the conduct of the regulatory commissions. In particular, Congress should adopt a rigid code of ethical behavior for all commissioners and tolerate no deviations from it.

Yet the purity of democratic institutions ultimately depends upon a knowledgeable, rational, and politically conscious public and a responsible and vigilant press which will insure the perpetuation of an intelligent citizenry. The independent commissions are not so rooted in our system that an outraged public could not force Congress to abolish them altogether. It is almost certain that additional revelations of unsavory conduct and maladministration in the commissions, such as we have had in recent weeks, will force basic redefinitions of their place in the American political process.

PARADISE

(After Giovanni di Paolo)

Paradise is a grove
Where flower and fruit tree
Form oval petals and pears
And apples only fair . . .
Among these saunter saints
Who uphold one another
In sacred conversations
Shaping hands that come close
As the lilies at their knees
While Seraphim burn
With the moment's breeze

SAMUEL MENASHE.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Vienna is gay and beautiful,
but the Russians are only fifty miles away

Conversation in Vienna

by JOHN A. LUKACS

THE LAST TIME I saw Vienna was 1946, when I escaped from a Hungary that was gradually falling under Soviet domination. Vienna was dark, hungry, gloomy. I stayed but two days and went on westward, to America. After me came thousands and thousands of Hungarian Displaced Persons, during 1947, 1948, 1949, when the frontier was still open, here and there, for a few minutes a day, between two patrols, or for a considerable sum. The Hungarian bourgeoisie oozed through, oozed on to the West. Among them was my mother, already very ill with the tuberculosis she had contracted in a damp, cold cellar during the siege of Budapest. She died in Vienna, in 1950.

Those were the days of the "Third Man." Half-occupied by the Russians, an island surrounded by the Soviet zone in Austria, Vienna was the classic scene for Graham Greene or Eric Ambler: spies and spivs, professional black-marketeers and semi-professional prostitutes with large liquid eyes, zither players and Siberian infantry tramping down the Ring. On the body of a beaten Europe Vienna was a soft, sordid scab.

Today the Siberian infantry is gone; and the fact that the Stalin-Platz is once again Schwarzenberg-Platz is a symbol, a great and important symbol. The Russian occupation left not one spiritual mark, not a scar. For ten years the soldiers of the largest land empire of the world held on to one-third of a small nation of seven million people; now it is as if they had never been here at all. The Austrian Communist Party is a subject of ridicule: a dull rather than a bad joke. Vienna is European, super-European; Western, very Western. This should be a lesson for those who still keep prattling about the terrible *spiritual* impact of the Communist "idea"; or to John Foster Dulles, who at the last moment was reluctant to quit Austria in exchange for the Russians' quitting their zone, for one never knows: the brilliant, the devilish machinations of the Communist propaganda machine. . . . But they *are* gone, after all. The shops on the Kaernterstrasse are smarter than their New York counterparts; and doe-eyed Viennese girls look alluring and sensuous in the chemise. (That Dean Acheson has made a statement against the chemise confirms my notion that American Secretaries of State should confine themselves to things like legal briefs and classic diplomacy and not pontificate about movements either of the spirit or of the flesh.)

There remains a large but, however. The Russians are only fifty miles away, to the east. We drove to the Hungarian frontier, and walked up within ten feet of the seven-foot-high double barbed-wire fence. The girls took a few pictures, and we looked at the soldier climbing up the watchtower on the other side. There is such a watchtower, a good fifty feet high, every half mile. Soon an uneasy patrol came down the Hungarian fields, carefully rounding the plowed-up strips and the land mines.

THIS I SAW but a day after I learned of the brutal execution of Nagy and Maleter. Back in Vienna gleamed the bright glass and the yellow tiles of the rebuilt Westbahnhof, and the old houses stoop peeling but confident and stolid in the evening, and the baroque majesty of the Burg shone buttery and white, bathed in brilliant spotlights that illuminate the Latin inscriptions for the glory of Hapsburg Emperors . . . but the Russians were only an hour away. And my homeland was cut off by barbed wire, perhaps forever. The superiority of the European spirit? Perhaps. But there stood not a single European soldier between the frontier and Vienna. Instead, the evening lamps were lit and everywhere Austrians and tourists ate their large platters and drank the fresh green wine of Austria. We did, too. We went to the first inn and drank a lot of wine and tried to forget things and were all quite silly.

And then, next morning, I met a Russian Agent.

He was an old family acquaintance. Descendant of a well-to-do Hungarian Jewish bourgeois family; rather handsome even now, in his fifties; dark glasses, silvery hair, just a tiny bit unshaven; the gambling type, the *faiseur* type, the type of the cashiered officer, just one notch above embezzler or gigolo. In another time or different circumstances he might have turned

Mr. Lukacs is the author of *The Great Powers and Eastern Europe*, a study in recent diplomatic history.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

up, in the twenties, for example, among The Hungarians Of Hollywood. But his days were the forties, not the twenties.

Having survived the war, he occasionally did errands for my family in Budapest, for he was fond of us, in his way. At that time he was a sort of curbstone banker. Soon afterwards he became a Russian Agent. Not a Communist Agent—a Russian Agent. And not a Political Agent—a Purchasing Agent. Like Wolfsheim in *The Great Gatsby,* this man had "gonnegtions." He smuggled, bought and sold all kinds of materials for the Russians in Vienna, in true Third Man style; at times he was rich. I remembered some of these things from my mother's last letters. Now we were sitting and drinking coffee together.

He was—momentarily—down and out. He had had a partner in some peculiar business venture and the man had quit with most of the money. Subsequently he succeeded in shaking me down for a forty-dollar "loan."

"Forty dollars!" he said, with a dramatized sigh. "You know what forty dollars meant to me six years ago? When your poor mother was still alive? Nothing, my boy, nothing! An evening's entertainment. This last thing has been an unexpected catastrophe. Still, ever since the Russians left, my business has not been the same."

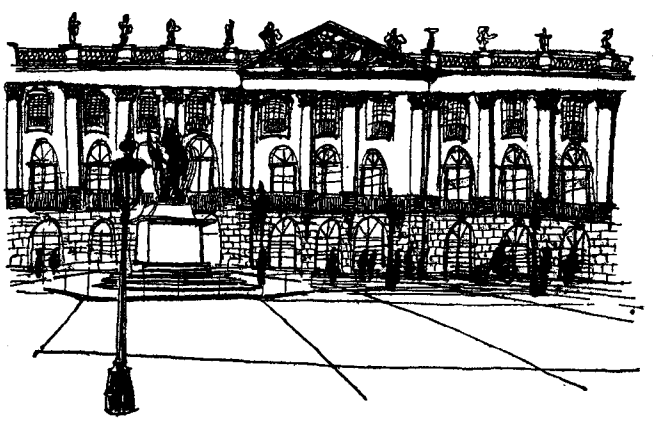
"But why do you stay in Vienna, then?"

(I had been surprised to find him in Vienna; I had thought he would be running an Export-Import firm somewhere in Rio de Janeiro.)

"There's still business to do with the Russians. And who knows? I, personally, think that the Russians will be back."

"Back?"

"Back. Back all over. Not only in Vienna. In Austria. All over Europe. The future is theirs. For a while I thought that the Americans had beaten them to it. But no. You have no idea of what's going on in the Soviet Union. What these people have produced within one generation is fantastic; incredible; they're coming up fast."



There was no use arguing with him about politics. We ordered another coffee, mine with double whipped cream.

HE THEN told me that he took frequent trips to Hungary; that Budapest was now miserably poor; but that this was the fault of the revolution; the revolutionaries were fools, absolute fools. They didn't have a chance, not the slightest. There was no question but that the Russians would never let the revolution succeed.

"But wasn't the whole population against them?"

"Yes, of course, but they were misled. Everyone was misled. They were gamblers. Crazy gamblers. Everybody."

"How can you say that? With such certainty, I mean?"

"I was there, you know! I was there during the first five days of the revolution. I had arrived in Budapest a week before the outbreak, on business.

"And you still say that everything was in vain, that the revolution could not but fail?"

"Of course. You don't know. You don't understand. The Russians work slowly. The strength lies in their idea, which is enormous, dynamic, something that you in America cannot imagine. . . ."

I had to interrupt his discourse on the dynamism of the Russian idea. "Tell me about the Revolution, about your personal experiences. What was it like? What did you do?"

"Well, I could hardly walk the streets; there was constant firing, you know."

I wanted to hear something personal, something immediate, from this intelligent and dissolute man, a fragment of the picture of our native city where he had stood, in the flesh, during those supremely exciting days of the revolt; an anti-Communist revolt seen by a Russian agent; a Hungarian national rising seen by an ex-Hungarian, by a native who now believes only in a Soviet future, whose last sparks of patriotic feeling must have died out long ago. . . .

He lit a cigarette.

"On the twenty-fourth of October," he said, "I was walking down from my hotel. . . . But it was incredible! You won't believe it."

"What was it? Go on."

"You see, I wanted to go across that little square but there was a big demonstration before the monument that's standing there. You could still hear the shooting but there were thousands of people on that square, women, children and old people. You couldn't get through. You couldn't get through at all. They sang the National Anthem; many of them were on their knees. . . ."

"And what did you do?"

"I knelt down, too; and I cried."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE INNOCENT YEARS

A FEW years ago the Democrats were blamed for "losing" China. Today we hear similar charges, not as violent or frequent to be sure, that the Republicans have "lost" the Middle East. There is still a sizable section of public opinion which seemingly can understand history only in terms of giant betrayals or vast conspiracies. But there are certainly not as many cries of treason today as there were in the early years of the decade. It would seem that the "illusion of American omnipotence," as it has been called, is subsiding. Hooray.

I can not imagine any demagogue today getting as much mileage out of the Middle East debacle as Senator McCarthy got out of the Chinese situation. Of course, next fall some politicos may try to, but the people have grown much more sophisticated, politically, in the past half-dozen years. I do not believe it will be possible now to sell many of them on the notion that they are the victims of twenty-six years of treason.

Paradoxically enough, for this I thank the Republican campaign orators of 1952 who promised us the moon. For the simple fact is, they did not come anywhere near restoring the nineteenth century as, throughout that memorable campaign, they implied they could. They could not have succeeded in accomplishing what they promised even if their efforts were a great deal more daring and imaginative than they have been. For the problems America faces are still every bit as complex and difficult as Adlai Stevenson in the 1952 campaign said they were. No amount of good will, actually no amount of political wisdom, can make them any simpler than they are.

Here is the brutal fact. America has to play a key role in a world it can not control. The present allies in addition to meeting a relentless Soviet challenge are burdened with the sins of their imperialist forefathers. In the minds of once-subject peoples the glorious Western ideals of freedom and democracy are stained with the long memories of these imperialisms. These people do not identify us, or our slogans, with their own aspirations for self-determination. Nor can we afford to identify ourselves with the concrete movements in their lands to realize such aspirations. We can not do so because, however pure the aspirations, the movements which incarnate them are usually the source of dissension, revolution and unrest; the Soviets are ever at hand to exploit the troubled situations that arise from them. The unpleasant fact is that in the West and in the uncommitted East the Soviets gain from disturbance. The Soviets do not want stability, order, internal peace in the uncommitted nations. The United States does.

The result of this situation is that we are forever in the position of seeking stability for the status quo while our propaganda and slogans fit the insurrectionist mood. We talk revolution and support stability. The Soviets talk stability and support revolution.

This puts us in a difficult position. The revolutionary spirit that has swept across the have-not half of the world should, ideally, be related to the continuing American revolution. After all it was here that the world was first shown that freedom can be combined with prosperity. But that is not the way it has worked out. It has not worked out that way because our natural tendency to support the aspirations of peoples to determine their own destiny is stopped short by the Soviet policy of exploiting these same aspirations.

So we must move carefully. We can not proceed by blueprints. We are often trying to do two quite contradictory things. We are trying to avoid turmoil and disorder and at the same time not lose the war of ideas in parts of the world where the war of ideas is already lost by any force that does not identify its interests with the people's striving for their place in the sun.

In general terms, this is what we are up against. It is as difficult a situation as any nation ever faced. It was not easy for Dean Acheson. It is not easy for John Foster Dulles. It will not be easy for his successor. There are no magic formulas by which the twentieth century can be repealed. Whoever works in the twentieth century has to face the realities of the century. In doing so he will soon realize that he is not God, he can not set back the clock or miraculously change the situation. He can only deal with it as it is, meeting realities head-on and doing what he can, without omnipotence, to shape the future.

I said that I thank the Republican campaigners of 1952 for the fairly common acceptance today of the "blood, sweat and tears" that can not be avoided. The 1952 campaign was America's last day of innocence. Even then Stevenson spoke realistically. But we still clung to our youth. We still listened to the Rebublican orators' promises of an omnipotent tomorrow and their "conspiracy-thesis" explanation of the present. All would be different after they got in, we were told. In the face of America's moral superiority, incarnate in those who believed in peace and prosperity, the evildoers of the world would wither and fade away, like old soldiers. Well, these same orators have given full evidence now that they were talking through their homburgs. I do not believe that any politician will ever again get away with the kind of stuff they preached in 1952. The boy has grown older.

JOHN COGLEY.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

For this philosopher, the fundamental fact of human existence is the fact of man with man

Buber's Pursuit of the Holy

by BERNARD G. MURCHLAND

THE ROOT OF man's humanness, the essential character of his being, according to Giambattista Vico, lies precisely in his power to transcend any assignable form or limits and to generate unlimited alternatives for his own action. It strikes me rather forcibly that Martin Buber, one of our most significant modern thinkers, must be situated directly within the Viconian tradition. Although I do not believe he was directly influenced, Buber's preoccupation with man's constant struggles for self-identity and his belief that the life of the spirit is essentially a genetic movement toward the ideal bring him close to the dominant themes of Vico's work. Both, moreover, stress the primitive poetic expression of the human consciousness in myth and legend as important means of gaining authentic insights into the nature of man.

Martin Buber was born in Vienna, in 1878, of an old Galician rabbinical family. Quite early in life he went to live with his grandfather, Salomon Buber, and in his erudite household young Martin acquired a knowledge of the Hebrew language, religion and traditions. He was, moreover, fully exposed to the two sources that had the greatest influence on his later development: the Western Enlightenment and Hasidism, the Jewish pietist movement. Under the influence of Kant, whom he read at the age of fifteen, Buber early saw the dichotomous character of man's situation and realized that the radical contradictions of life cannot be reconciled conceptually but only through the lived life of experience. (As he has since said, God cannot be expressed but only addressed.)

His later studies at the universities of Vienna, Berlin, Leipzig and Zurich gave him a firm grasp of Western culture. He knew Freud and was sympathetic to the attempt of such writers as Dostoevsky, Tolstoy and Ibsen to confront the spiritual and cultural decadence of the time. The romantic rebellion of the late nineteenth century and the social teachings of men like Marx, Proudhon, and Landauer affected his thinking to some extent. It should be pointed out, too, that Buber's thought bears a direct relationship to the embryonic existentialism of Nietzsche, to Kierkegaard, to some of the romantic poets and to Husserl's phenomenology—although in the passage of time he came to criticize every one of these.

At the age of twenty he joined the Zionist movement. But the kind of antinomianism that has since remained characteristic of him began to manifest itself, and he soon broke with the stringent moralism of that group. For the next few years he concentrated solely on scholarly pursuits. In the mythology of the religious classics of both the East and the West he believed he had tapped "a source of elemental wisdom about man and his world." It was a wisdom, moreover, which could not be had in science or in rational categories. His studies of Jewish tradition at this time helped him greatly in defining his own philosophy. The distinctiveness of the Jewish faith he found to be an imminent spirituality, the sanctification—or hallowing—of all life and the reality of life in community. His experience with the Hasidic communities sharpened these convictions. "The Hasidic teaching," he wrote in 1907, "is the most powerful and unique phenomenon which the Diaspora has produced."

UNDER THE immediate influence of Hasidism his whole philosophy crystallized about a concern with man's pursuit of the Holy, that is, man's search for authentic wholeness and identity. This is the central human situation and underlies all of Buber's books, particularly his most important work, *I and Thou*. And it is within this context that Arthur Cohen develops his short, but very excellent study, *Martin Buber* (Hilary House. $2.). It seems to be particularly significant that Mr. Cohen should begin his study, after some introductory remarks, by noting Buber's attack on Kierkegaard "to underscore the tragic misplacement of the Holy in the modern world." For this effectively indicates Buber's great emphasis upon social relationships—an emphasis which is essential to his idea of the Holy.

Kierkegaard, it will be recalled, defined the category of the "single one"—that is, he who renounces contact with the world and with other people to direct himself solely to God—as the fundamental religious standpoint. Buber, on the other hand, saw the fundamental

Father Murchland, C.S.C., a frequent contributor, is a member of the editorial staff of Fides Publishers.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

fact of human existence as the fact of *man with man.* The important thing about human life is what takes place between man and man in community. Man becomes whole only through the embracing of polarity, through his relationship with others. In other words, life is essentially dialogue. As Buber himself explained it in *Between Man and Man:* "We are created along with one another and directed to a life with one another. Creatures are placed in my way so that I, their fellow creature, by means of them and with them find the way to God. A God reached by their exclusion would not be the God of all lives in whom all life is fulfilled."

Mr. Cohen well points out the importance of a decisive personal experience in Buber's life. One afternoon a young man came to visit with Buber. He was treated cordially and attentively but, Buber recalled afterwards, "I omitted to guess the questions which he did not put." Later he learned that the young man had died, presumably by his own hand, and the significance of the encounter then struck him. "I learned that he had come to me," he says in his *Dialogue,* "not casually, but borne by destiny, not for a chat but for a decision. He had come to me in this hour. What do we expect when we are in despair and yet go to a man? Surely a presence by means of which we are told that nevertheless there is meaning." One thinks of Mauriac's remark to the effect that the consequences of a chance meeting between two people are eternal.

This episode is of fundamental importance in understanding the doctrine that was to emerge so eloquently in *I and Thou.* The *I-Thou* dialogue is the primal category of Buber's thought which enables him, with fresh terminology and rich symbolism, to construct a vital philosophy of the personal. The importance of intimate relations between persons is, he believes, the redeeming message for an impersonal, objectified, technological world (which finds expression in a lifeless, uncreative *I-It* relationship). The important thing is man's capacity to address and be addressed by another, to be invoked or appealed to in the sacred sanctuary of his humanity. This is no mere poetic sentiment but the fundamental dimension of human experience. It is what differentiates each individual and yet immerses him into the stream of life by harmonizing his life with "the enduring presence of God in the world." It constitutes man's specific redemptive commitment to creation. As Buber puts it concisely in *I and Thou:* "The primary word *I-Thou* can only be spoken with the whole being. The primary word *I-It* can never be spoken with the whole being." And the Thou is expressed only in meeting. In virtue of this insight Buber is able to affirm the whole world of freedom, destiny, love and grace. (Love, for example, is defined by him as being "the responsibility of an I for a Thou.")

Out of the intimacy of personal relations arises a deep awareness of God's nature. The Thou, Mr. Cohen explains, is the Holy. God is "wholly other," and wholly present. "If any man," he writes, "could persevere forever in the speaking of Thou, such a man would be God; but such cannot be, for man cannot avoid the constricting limits of his situation. Man cannot banish the It; he can seek only to transform it. This is the religious passion, 'not to disregard everything but to see everything in the Thou, not to renounce the world but to establish it on its true basis.' " "It is in this binding up of a man and the eternal Thou which constitutes that force by which the world is given its greatest meaning. It is, however, extremely difficult to accomplish due to the elusive nature of the Holy. And it is for this reason that Buber criticizes rather severely those institutional religions that seek to 'tie God to liturgical continuity.' "

This concern with the primal problem of being, the *I-Thou* dialogue, might be said to be Buber's first field of endeavor. A second area is his Biblical, Hasidic and Jewish exegesis which serves as a concrete, historical illustration of the problem of being. Buber is imbued with the Old Testament eschatological vision of the world. He conceives the Bible as the "meeting place of God and man," and Judaism as "the fashioning of a way for the Holy amid the concrete." Mr. Cohen elucidates Buber's Biblical interpretation that "God is fulfilled in otherness, in the irreducible, unique and underivative person of man" (and there is, of course, a sense in which that is true) and his attitudes towards Christianity. Christ, for Buber, continues the prophetic tradition of the "suffering servant" and, in His instrumental capacity, consummates a new covenant between the peoples of the earth and God.

A DETAILED discussion of Hasidism would probably prove helpful for the reader unfamiliar with Buber's work. As Paul Pfuetze wrote in his study of Martin Buber: "It was this force which, more than any other, shaped his philosophy, his interpretation of religion, as well as his sociological and educational theories." Hasidism, in brief outline, was an eighteenth-century Jewish revivalist movement that concentrated on spiritual immanence, inward renewal, and the creative, everyday manifestations of the Holy in community relationships. It stressed mystic spontaneity in contrast to the legalism of strict Rabbinism, the value of personality and man's indispensable role in fulfilling creation. It was during a period of some five years in isolated study of Hasidic texts that Buber's convictions about community and dialogue began to take form and only after his self-imposed exile did he set out decidedly upon his life's mission.

It was also primarily the influence of Hasidism that impelled Buber to take up "the task of showing the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

relevance of dialogue to modern life." All of Buber's thinking is directed, with great practical urgency, to the question: What is Man? He is neither the isolated individual or man assimilated to a group. Rather he is "man with man" and in this intimate contact a transference of a vital portion of his nature takes place which generates the values of all true dialogue—values that might be called love, community, awareness, observance, inclusion, friendship, sympathy and especially responsibility. Buber argues convincingly that responsibility must be rescued from the sphere of shallow ethics to be injected once again into the mainstream of existence: Man must rid himself of all fictitious responsibility, all things to which he is not truly answerable. Someone has said that the outstanding characteristic of Buber's personality as well as his work is "the greatest conceivable consciousness of responsibility." Thus, like a great number of other prophetic figures of our day, Buber challenges our easy-going mediocrity and focuses our attention painfully upon the necessity of individual decision and commitment. Responsibility is inescapable and irrevocable and the only guarantee that creative life will prevail.

Buber also adds this important consequence to his dialogic viewpoint: the intimacies that transpire between man and man do not take place in neutrality. They draw into their vortex the gigantic indifference of the world and sanctify the ground over which they take place. This might be called Buber's sacramental outlook which consists in "the selection and incorporation of the Holy into the order of its existence," or, more simply, the hallowing of all things. Notes Mr. Cohen: "Though [the world] may be gestated by the divine and filled with His presence, it is not penetrated by the Holy until it has been retrieved from its neutrality by the community. The crisis of modern culture is that it leaves more and more of the world beyond the reach of sacramental transformation. The crisis is, in effect, the increasing disjunction of the Holy and the community; the act of binding, where it occurs, is formalized and rigidified. . . . The crisis of the world is that the province of the profane is allowed to increase its domination." There may be some danger, Mr. Cohen believes, that Buber simplifies his position somewhat by playing down the tragic dimension of existence, by failing to rise to the heights of true prophetic indignation.

But there can be no doubt that Buber's awareness of the maladies of our century is very perceptive indeed. While not specifically either a theologian or a philosopher, he is one of the greatest, if not the greatest, Jewish thinker of the century. "No Jewish thinker," Maurice Friedman has said, "has had a greater cultural, intellectual, and religious influence than has Buber in the last four decades." And his influence has been equally pronounced among Christian thinkers as among Jews. Karl Barth, Nicholas Berdyaev, Emil Brunner, Martin D'Arcy, Reinhold Niebuhr, Paul Tillich, Romano Guardini and Friedrich Gogarten are a few of the Christian religious thinkers most significantly influenced by him—although they have not infrequently been criticized for misinterpreting his views or forcing his categories beyond the meaning they were conceived to convey. His teaching upon man's cooperative role in God's redemptive plan for the world brings him close to Catholicism. Moreover, Catholics can find in his notions of community and dialogue valuable insights into the great doctrine relating to the Mystical Body, Grace and the Sacraments. His enmity towards any fixed rules, on the other hand, and his radical insistence upon the individual brings him the sympathy of Protestantism. But all Christians can find in his social teaching and desire for unity much that is not only acceptable but vitally necessary in view of our world situation today.

ONE CANNOT fail to note, and this seems to me strikingly meaningful, the parallel between Buber's thought and that of the French Catholic philosopher, Gabriel Marcel. The fact that there was no apparent interchange of influence between these two men makes the comparison that much more significant and would seem to be some indication of the frightful dangers we face. "I can communicate effectively with myself only in the measure that I communicate effectively with another," Marcel has said. That is to say, he goes on to explain, I can discover the being by which I am radically constituted only when this other, far from being the other, becomes a thou for me. We are led to the understanding of human nature above all through the study of human relationships which are signified by judgments in the second person, in the *thou*. These unobjective relationships are creative, for through them I create myself and help another to create his own freedom.

"I have occasionally described my standpoint to my friends as a narrow ridge," Buber wrote in *Between Man and Man*. "I wanted by this to express that I did not rest on the broad upland of a system that includes a series of sure statements about the absolute, but on a narrow rocky ridge between the gulfs where there is no sureness of expressible knowledge but the certainty of meeting what remains undisclosed." This seems to me a most suitable summary of his position. It signifies particularly the essentially unifying quality of his philosophy which makes it so important in a time when the great fields of human endeavor are more and more breaking up into conflicting and irreconcilable opposites. Buber's vision is perhaps most relevant in the measure that it jolts us out of our normal channels of thought and opens fresh and fertile perspectives upon the problem of man in the world today.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE SCREEN

WON'T YOU STEP INTO MY PARLOR?

EVER SINCE I saw the preview of "The Fly" I have examined every fly that swoops into my apartment to see if it has the face and left hand of a man, so you can see what an impression this science-fiction movie had on me. Its plot concerns a scientist who invents an elaborate electronics machine that can disintegrate matter placed in an enormous tube and then put it together again in another tube—much as television transmits a picture. We see him performing his experiments with an ashtray and, after he works out the problem of transportation of molecules, with a newspaper. He tries it on the family cat, but the cat disappears into cat atoms. Later, however, he is successful with a bottle of champagne and a guinea pig. Unfortunately his big mistake comes when he works the experiment on himself. A fly is in the disintegrator tube with him; and during the transmission the molecules get mixed. He winds up with the head and left claw of the fly, while the fly, in its proper small scale, has his head and hand.

Most of "The Fly" is told in a flashback by the scientist's wife who admits she killed her husband but insists she is not a murderer; she was merely following his last wishes. This rather debatable point is surrounded in mystery. But what makes "The Fly" an unusual item in the science-fiction genre is Producer-director Kurt Neumann's handling of the fantastic tale. He tells it in dead seriousness, and his cast play along as if all this were really happening. Al Hedison makes the scientist a likable fellow, somewhat absent-minded about his family but devoted to his wife and son as he is to his work. As his wife, Patricia Owens is quietly charming until she's driven to the point of breakdown by the turn of events. The supporting cast is led by Vincent Price as the scientist's brother and by Herbert Marshall as the Montreal police inspector who insists that there's something irregular going on here.

The special effects department have their big moment during the transmitting scenes, but perhaps because "The Fly" is done so simply, the horror when it comes is all the more terrifying. The scientist keeps his head covered most of the time (but not always) after the unfortunate transmission, but we do see his handsome face again after his death when the fly itself is caught in a spider's web. The script, however, fails to answer the question it proposes: who is really responsible for the death of the scientist?

THE FIFTH OF the Cinerama productions "Cinerama—South Seas Adventure," is one of the best. Like its predecessors, it is essentially a travelogue with no more than a suggestion of a story, but this film has the advantage of being less pretentious than the earlier Cineramas. Technicolor and Cinerama's three-way cameras once again brighten the large curved screen that gives the illusion of depth; and the quiet, expository script is effectively read by Orson Welles and others.

After visiting the usual tourist spots in Hawaii, "South Seas Adventure" goes on to Tahiti with a Frenchman interested in Gauguin's haunts; then to Tonga (and Handel's *Messiah* sung in Polynesian), then to Fiji (native troops passing in review and some primitive dances), then to a mission in the New Hebrides and to Pentecost Island where some breath-taking savage rites are photographed. The last half of the film concentrates on New Zealand and Australia and should be of special interest to those who were stationed down under and would like to renew acquaintance with these friendly people and places.

While it is true, as before, that this fifth Cinerama has its share of realistic camera work in boats and planes to give the audience a feeling of participation, the film seems less conscious of its tricks than previous efforts. Now if Cinerama could get beyond the travelogue stage, it might some day turn out a really first-rate film.

THERE HAVE been many good westerns on our screens in the past few years and "Gunman's Walk" adds to the number. It has all the ingredients: plenty of fast action, magnificent scenery photographed in Technicolor and CinemaScope, and adult themes—perhaps, from the point of view of coherence and impact, too many themes.

Van Heflin gives an outstanding performance as a self-made western gun in Wyoming in the 1890's. Also good are Tab Hunter as his elder son: mean, rebellious, jealous of his father whom he tries to emulate without having his father's strength; and James Darren as the younger son: gentle, disappointing to his father, and in his brother's eyes guilty of the unpardonable error of falling in love with a girl (Kathryn Grant) who is half-Indian. When taciturn Tab, who particularly hates "breeds," is responsible for the death of this girl's brother, the entire family is involved in the trial. Under Phil Karlson's understanding direction, the whole cast come through well with thoughtful portrayals, particularly Robert F. Simon, as the sheriff who sympathizes with the father but will take no back talk from Tab, and Mickey Shaughnessy as the deputy he appoints to keep an eye on the unmanageable young man. Frank Nugent's forceful script doesn't evade the issues of responsibility. Discerning audiences should find quite a number of things to like in the thoughtful western called "Gunman's Walk."

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

COMMUNICATIONS

"FARM WORKERS FROM MEXICO"

St. Paul, Minn.

TO THE EDITORS: The editors of The Commonweal are to be commended for their interest in the many problems associated with migratory farm workers ["Farm Workers from Mexico," July 4]. One who is familiar with conditions under which these people live and work has to admit that in the exchange of letters between Mr. Goodwin of the U. S. Department of Labor and Mr. LeBerthon, the latter probably shows evidence of being in closer contact with reality.

As far as "braceros" are concerned, it is true that contractual agreements between the United States and Mexican governments spell out conditions under which they live and work. As to whether these agreements are abided by is a completely different thing. Instances were found in Minnesota, for example, where "braceros" were housed in old, weather-battered chicken coops. There is some evidence to believe, too, that in some instances wages paid "braceros" are used as a norm to determine "braceros" wages. These are obvious violations of contractual agreements.

Probably I am misinterpreting Mr. Goodwin's remarks, but he seems to say that thousands of investigations by the Department of Labor failed to uncover a single complaint from the "braceros." I have personally listened to many complaints from both domestic migrants and "braceros." These people distrust the "white man." They will express their complaints only when they are sure of no reprisals. Too many of them have seen their fellow-workers express legitimate complaints, only to be sent home as "troublemakers"—without a fair hearing.

In one Minnesota community this spring some native "whites" objected to the presence of domestic migrant farm workers on the grounds that they undercut wages and performed jobs that the local unemployed could perform just as well. The domestic migrants, in turn, often complain that the "braceros" undercut wages. Instances are found where both "braceros" and domestic migrants go home after the harvest not much better off financially than they were when they came to Minnesota, and the reason is not lack of thrift.

There are many people in government, from the local level all the way to Washington, who are concerned about the many problems related to migratory farm workers. Probably in too many instances they are handicapped by lack of complete information. It seems that in order to be fair and objective in these matters one has to have bona fide information from the migrants themselves as well as from the growers and food processors.

Mr. Goodwin need not fear that remarks like those made by Mr. LeBerthon will make "readers . . . draw totally unwarranted inferences." It has been my experience that, regardless of what one says, most people underestimate the true conditions. When they see for themselves, they are appalled.

(Rev.) EDWARD GRZESKOWIAK
Chairman: Migrant Workers Subcommittee,
Governor's Commission on Human Rights,
State of Minnesota.

"AMERICA'S FARM PROBLEM"

El Cajon, Calif.

TO THE EDITORS: I found Edward T. Chase's article on "America's Farm Problem" [June 27] quite interesting, but I must take issue with his thesis that the problem is simply one of "dislocation from technological progress." In industry, increased productivity has brought higher profits and higher wages. In agriculture, the reverse is true.

Leonard Hall, an Ozarks farmer who does a column on rural life for the St. Louis *Post-Dispatch,* says the nation's farm problem stems from "not too much, but the wrong kind of government in agriculture." During the past twelve years, Mr. Hall has seen the price "of good beef cows vary from $70 to $350, a fluctuation of five hundred per cent. Apply these variations to the price of your automobile or your job and you see what the farmer is up against. At no time during the past twelve years have cattle been as badly over-produced as are automobiles today. Yet has the price for your new car plummeted from $3,500 to $700? And what if your earnings for doing the same or a steadily better job had started at $4,000 back in 1948, risen to a prosperous $6,400, dropped in 1952 to around $1,200, then gradually climbed again to $3,600 . . . ?"

It would seem from this that farming is the only business still exposed to the rigors of the competitive market.

Mr. Chase has attempted to disassociate the middleman, the corporate farm and Ezra Taft Benson from the problem. I believe all three must share responsibility for the present farm plight. While farm income is at rock bottom, the middlemen (food processors, chain stores, etc.) report record profits, corporate farms are extending their holdings, and Mr. Benson accelerates the trend by formulating policies which favor the processor over the producer, the factory in the field over the family farm and the land exploiter over the man who has expended the energies of a lifetime in husbanding his land.

If we are to build a sound farm program, I believe it is essential that we lay to rest the myth that the government guarantees all farmers a living at the expense of other segments of the economy. The fact is that less

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

than fifteen per cent of farm production receives any government support, and most of this goes to the large operators who contribute most to surpluses and who are least in need of government assistance.

LAWRENCE T. KING.

NEWS OF PORTUGAL

TO THE EDITORS: News of Portugal always interests me and I have made an effort to read as much of what is published as comes to my attention. Few times have I found as concise, accurate, and significant a report on any activity there as you have published in the two articles by Mr. Francis E. McMahon and underlined by your editorial of July 18.

The May 30 issue set the stage by giving a cogent report of what the Salazar regime has done in thirty years of dictatorial rule. The few positive results were shown to be too high a price to pay for the loss in the traditional human freedoms. And Salazar, the individual was shown, correctly, to be solely responsible for the direction of the dictatorship. The constant reference by some that he is an exemplary Catholic statesman brings to mind the Gospel of Matthew 7, 15-21, which seems to me particularly appropriate, as Christ points the finger at the false prophets "who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves." He means men who profess Christ's law of mercy, and do no mercy; who profess His law of justice, and do no justice; who profess His law of love, and love not.

Mr. McMahon in the issue of July 4 not only gave a good account of the campaign and election but he bent over backwards to be fair to a regime that had shown the utmost contempt for its own law and the simple truth. Censorship forbade photographs or figures of the crowds that greeted General Humberto Delgado. The secret police (P.I.D.E.) had planned disorders to bring out the guards with fixed bayonets to disperse the peaceful gatherings that wanted only to welcome a man who was not afraid to challenge the dictatorship, and everywhere he went was cheered as "the fearless one." That, under a dictatorship, is the highest praise.

Your editorial of July 18 spotted the pertinent point of Salazar's hour-long speech, his concern with future opposition. He obviously was scared of the reaction of the people to a candidate of the opposition and would take the necessary steps to prevent such recurrence in the future. He means to have the law changed so that the selection is made by the National Assembly rather than by popular vote.

What is not widely known is that Salazar was forced by public pressure to express himself in detail on the campaign and the election. Even the newspapers that support him wrote that some consideration ought to be given to the large mass of the opposition. In the speech he admitted that some friendly sources had suggested that recognition be given to the aspirations of the people through an opposition party, but he answered to the effect that Portugal is not America. . . .

The evident result is that hundreds—no definite figure is available—of persons of the opposition have been arrested without trial, and that General Delgado, after having lost his job with the civil air force, is under surveillance and an inquiry is being made apparently to bring him to trial and impose on him a long jail sentence. That will send him out of the country and to one of the penal colonies.

The opposition is trying to make itself felt before the authorities by refusing to buy newspapers, and declaring, clandestinely, specific days, now and then, as days of mourning for freedom. On those days their sympathizers are asked to wear deep black. The sad part of the whole thing is that the Portuguese people under Salazar need no excuse for the wearing of the black since that color reflects pretty accurately the sad outlook for the near future.

A PORTUGUESE EXILE.

Because of possible consequences to his family and friends in Portugal, we have withheld the name of the author of this letter. —THE EDITORS.

THAT DREAD WORD, TUBERCULOSIS! . . .

It used to be even more dismal when one was told he had that disease. Nowadays there are remedies. One in particular has been recommended for use in the missions and we are planning to send a million tablets to begin with, to 100 mission stations. You are invited to help. For $20.00 we will undertake to send 10,000 tablets to one of the many missionaries who are pleading for this remedy. Do not delay. The poor sufferers are waiting for relief. Tell your friends and get them also to contribute. Send your gift to Rev. Edward F. Garesché, S.J., President, Catholic Medical Mission Board, Inc., 10 West 17th Street, New York 11, N. Y.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Greatest Novel in Chinese Literature

DREAM OF THE RED CHAMBER. By Tsao Hsueh-Chin. Translated by Chi-Chen Wang. Twayne. $6.

THE DREAM OF THE RED CHAMBER. By Taso Hsueh-Chin. Translated from the German of Dr. Franz Kuhn by Florence and Isabel McHugh. Pantheon. $7.50.

By MARIAN SELDIN

DREAM of the Red Chamber, an eighteenth-century novel the Chinese consider their greatest, is said to depart from earlier Chinese literary tradition in being both realistic and, as most scholars agree, autobiographical. Its author, Tsao Hsueh-Chin, belonged to a wealthy family whose members held prominent government posts under the Mandarins. During his lifetime its fortunes and his own declined rapidly, and it is this fall from favor which forms the backdrop against which the story is told.

Its protagonist, Pao-Yu, the pampered child of a princely family, the Chias, grows up surrounded by doting women—his grandmother, his mother, his aunts, his cousins and the retinue of maids who serve each of them. The adults who govern the affairs of his family are greedy and corrupt, and though the clan seems to be at the height of its power, their irresponsibility has undermined its position. The only adult the boy knows who has both intelligence and integrity is his father, Chia Cheng, a stern Confucian whose harshness frightens far more than it disciplines him.

Of the lovely cousins who grow up with Pao-Yu in the Park of Delightful Vision, a garden within the confines of the Chia estate, two —Black Jade and Precious Virtue (Precious Clasp in the Wang translation)—are especially important. He falls in love with Black Jade but is tricked, while neurotically ill, into marriage with Precious Virtue. Black Jade, who is consumptive, dies of a broken heart, convinced that Pao-Yu has chosen her rival.

Calamity upon calamity befalls the clan, usually because chicanery the Chias think well hidden becomes publicly known, and the family seems destined for destruction. But Pao-Yu, who, in spite of his intelligence and his talents, has seemed throughout his youth to be unable to do what his position and his people demand of him, restores its fortune by passing the Imperial Examinations with brilliance. Having done so, he turns from the world when its honors can be his to become a Buddhist monk.

Publication of these two translations gives English-speaking people very nearly their first opportunity to read the *Dream,* since the only earlier English version is considerably truncated. Nor are they redundant, for though they may involve basically the same story, they succeed in being very different novels. Chi-Chen Wang's translation is a love story and a picture of the clan-life of a great family. For Franz Kuhn, whose German translation is the basis for the Pantheon edition, the work is this and something more. The difference between the two is suggested by their differing interpretations of the title: To Dr. Wang it means "dreams of young maidens," since the "red chamber" is where young ladies lived. Dr. Kuhn sees it as a metaphor not just for young girls but for worldly goods and earthly glory, a sort of extension or application of "red dust"—the term Buddhists use to refer to the mortal world.

The Wang translation, then, is the lighter in vein, usually the more lyric. For instance, Pao-Yu's principal maid, "Pearl" in the Kuhn version, is "Pervading Fragrance" for Dr. Wang, and one of Pao-Yu's other cousins, "Little Cloud" to Dr. Kuhn, is "River Mist" to Dr. Wang. Wang's lovers are quite charming and their childhood affair is both tender and funny. Their foolish quarrels and almost equally foolish reconciliations are gently detailed, and the love story's ending is touchingly told. But one finishes this version feeling something is missing, for though it could conceivably be China's best novel, it would be difficult to term it China's greatest, for more is needed to make it great at all. Its book jacket says of the Chias: "Graciously, in spite of sorrows and misfortunes, their lives glided into years . . . laughing a little and loving much." The translation's jauntiness makes the comment not particularly inept, even though while their lives glide into only seven years, four members of the family are publicly disgraced, a nun living under its protection is kidnapped, at least six people commit suicide, and an attempted murder backfires, to mention only some of the more sensational "misfortunes."

The Kuhn translation, on the other hand, gives the novel depth and scope by making the Chia family, rather than Pao-Yu, the center of interest. Black Jade's needless death and the neurotic immaturity through which Pao-Yu fails to save her form artistically the climactic event in the family's decline, but it *is* an incident, one of many in which corruption, avarice, the misuse of power cause the innocent to suffer and tear at the fabric of the family and its traditions. The difference lies as much in emphasis and tone as it does in choice of material. Phoenix, for instance, the shrewd daughter-in-law whose ruthlessness is perhaps as much responsible for the Chias' near-ruin as any one factor, practices usury with the household funds more heartlessly in the Wang than in the Kuhn text, simply because Wang presents more dramatically the day-to-day effects of her greed upon the family. Yet in the Kuhn version her ill-doing assumes a different dimension, for to him she not only makes those who must live with her unhappy: her selfishness is blindly self-destructive, for it endangers the clan, the source of her own status and meaning.

It is impossible for one whose

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

frame of reference is wholly Occidental to determine which of the translations more accurately captures the novel's spirit. It would seem that both validly present facets of the work, so much so that one needs to read the two of them if he is to grasp why the *Dream* is for the Chinese—as Lin Yutang suggests it does—what Shakespeare is for the English. If the Kuhn version is the more impressive in its "high seriousness," it is the less charming. One misses in it not only Wang's lightness of touch in humorous situations but also the sureness, the Chineseness, of his characterizations.

Nonetheless, the family's decline would seem to be the wiser choice of theme, for it gives the novel not only stature but a unity remarkable in a work seemingly so diffuse. The Wang version is a love story *and* a novel of manners. Dr. Kuhn's is a tragic drama into which both aspects fuse. Seen from the latter point of view, only one of the multitude of episodes in either of the translations—and the two differ as much in choice of incident as they do in tone—seems meaningless, and that is less because it adds nothing to the novel than because it is, itself, incomplete. The unity of the *Dream* is the more noteworthy in that Tsao Hsueh Chin's death left it unfinished. It was completed, apparently from Tsao's outline, by Kao Ngoh, one of its early editors.

The novel's unity stems also from a characteristic curiously at odds with the fact that it is a realistic novel. On the level of technique, its strands are drawn together primarily through recurrent dream and myth-motifs. The artistic framework within which the action takes place is "The Story of the Stone," a stone the Goddess who repaired the dome of heaven rejected because, endowed with life, it was too restless to be useful. The stone enters the "red dust" as a piece of jade found in Pao-Yu's mouth when he is born. Black Jade, in the Great Void, is a flower the stone has watered with dew. Having no way to repay it for its kindness, the flower prays to live a life of tears for it in the mortal world, and most of Black Jade's tears are related in one way or another to the stone. Events are foreshadowed throughout the novel in dream-sequences, and Pao-Yu's stone plays an actual as well as psychological role in the action, for the loss of the stone causes the illness which precedes his marriage to Precious Virtue. Much of this, of course, is allegorical, as Dr. Kuhn's introduction somewhat pedantically points out, but the reader feels no need to insist upon its being allegory. The preternatural elements are acceptable as phenomena in what is in other ways a very earthly world.

The effect may in part be due to the Westerner's attitude toward China. He expects it to be strange. An Englishman wouldn't lose his senses if he were parted from the amulet with which he was born (though, naturally, he wouldn't be born with one either), but who knows about a Chinaman? I think the more important reason, though, is that the pattern of life the book depicts suggests a culture in which the line between the real and the allegorical is less rigidly drawn than it is in the West. In a world in which one's birthday is his "day of a thousand autumns," in which sex is referred to as "breeze and moonlight" or "play of the cloud and the rain," human beings would seem to be viewing reality with the sort of bifocals which enable them to perceive it quite immediately on both a factual and an imaginative level. The quality gives passages which in novels of the West would probably be raw naturalism both delicacy and detachment.

The novel exhibits more than the realism of fact and detail, though it has that, too—it *could* be read as a kind of sociology of eighteenth-century China. What is more important, it is realistic enough to involve the reader in a new world, a world sensual, sophisticated and superstitious, graced by a natural charity, yet both sentimental and quite ruthless. It has, even beyond this, the reality which belongs to the greatest of novels—to *Kristin Lavransdatter,* perhaps, or *War and Peace*—a reality which dramatizes not only the way a people lives but also the way it thinks. One does not precisely know as he reads the book why the Chinese image heaven as The Great Void or earth as the red dust, but for the duration of the novel he is quite likely to share their point of view.

(One ought at least to mention the delicate Chinese woodcuts which illustrate the Kuhn version and to suggest to future publishers of the *Dream* that they provide a more detailed list as guide to the characters. Both editions identify the major connections of the Chia family, but it's the minor ones who cause confusion.)

War Novel from Germany

CRACK OF DOOM. By Willi Heinrich. Translated by Oliver Coburn. Farrar, Straus. $3.95.

By WILLIAM DUNLEA

THE DEVIOUS plot and whirlwind narrative of this super-eventful war novel from Germany leave a very comfortable margin for determining what they are up to. The hardship of capsuling them is inadvertently emphasized in the flyer, where few details other than time (December, 1944) and setting (the Carpathian Mountains in Czechoslovakia) are enlightening.

As his *Cross of Iron* indicated, Willi Heinrich is an equally well-equipped transcriber of the electronic frenzy of a frontline GHQ and of mechanized calamity; his battle scenes are hell in orbit. The decisive moments are ones of unutterable confusion, mocking even as they resemble the precision of strategy which must be altered from minute to minute, a precision hinged to victory according to a plan which destiny proscribes. War is nothing but preparation, supplying design to disaster.

Crack of Doom is a closeup of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

war more than of warriors. The film technique, with its unbroken succession of effects, makes it seem that no plot exists. One is there, but it cannot be developed tidily. The crisis dramatized is that of a German division that has lost its commanding general to Czech partisans. Major Giesinger, the officer acting as temporary commander, quixotically proposes to hazard his only available battalion in an expedition to recover the captive brass. His aides, including Schmitt the batallion's captain, regard the adventure as futile and a peril to the entire front, where presence of the troops in question could decide whether the impending withdrawal before the crushing Red offensive is to be tactical or a rout. Giesinger stubbornly dispatches Schmitt, alloting him two days to accomplish the vain mission. He proves to be as resourceful as his chief is reckless, but the front collapses.

For the officers and combatants alike the war can not be rationalized by political fictions; it will permit itself only to be fought out. And it is fought on a plane of issue where the breath of Nazi ideology is slight. The men despise the struggle simply because they must wage it; the officers despise it because they are losing it. It is always soulless butchery at the front; the spiritual murderers are elsewhere.

Willi Heinrich scarcely makes a point of anatomizing such questions. His anti-Nazism, easily recognized though not stentorian, is unimportant. War is a climactic hallucination with power to invert, yet not erase, causes and effects. Heinrich is dispassionate in all but his hatred of war; yet even when the soldier who comes nearest to being the hero finally deserts, Heinrich does not applaud.

Although he courts no sympathy for his Germans—often so atypical they could be fighting on the other side—his partisans feast on internecine vengeance of a sadism that has nothing to learn from the Gestapo. They remain human beings, however, though not directly accountable for what the war has made them.

For the most part Heinrich fails to reckon with any motivation in was larger than survival. This will never explain the unprecedented gratuity of so much of the brutality, far less the pyromaniac nature of the war he writes about. It is this curtailed perspective which withholds *Crack of Doom* from the first rank of war novels.

A Dark Idyll

THE NARROWEST CIRCLE. By Katherine Shattuck. McDowell, Obolensky. $3.75.

By ALICE ELLEN MAYHEW

THREE YOUNG people, a college professor, his wife and a young woman friend, spending a summer together, promise a rare idyll of perennial pleasures, happy in wrack and ruin if only they are allowed to dream, mostly out loud. Their discourse is a little too stilted to be really gay but the place rings with laughter. Very shortly, however, Miss Shattuck shoots holes in the false idyll and bathes her scenes with a slightly unholy light.

As the narrow circle tightens and turns, the characters try to fix their own identity and that of the others but none can be sure if he has hold of the right image. Too often, what is extracted out of the clutter as true or beautiful is inexact and merely amusing. More and more, their pleasures elude them, their roles switch, their identities are lost. *Euclid alone has looked on beauty bare.* "For those white pergolas of innocence, down which they travelled, led straight to the roller coaster, which from a distance seemed a new kind, a safe sort of solid geometry, but in reality how fluid, how tumbling, how terrible." Nancy, the wife, had been the happiest person George knew. Now she is possessed by her dwindling joy, weeping at twenty-eight, like the maiden in the ballad for her buried youth; tormented by guilt toward her little girl whom she can not mother and who runs like a wraith into the

"one of the most fascinating and informative books of this or any other year . . . a compact masterpiece of historical writing."
—New York Herald Tribune Book Review

"highly entertaining . . . worthy of a place beside Chaucer."
—Times Literary Supplement (London)

ONCE TO SINAI

by H. F. M. PRESCOTT

author of *The Man on a Donkey* and *Son of Dust*

"Once to Sinai is Miss Prescott's account of a very real and very entertaining journey made in 1483-84 by a German Dominican friar, Felix Fabri [who] proved himself such a cheerful, inquisitive and gregarious traveler that the journal he kept, in the artful hands of Miss Prescott, forms the basis for a delightful, rich and extremely revealing narrative . . . No one writing in English today recreates the past with a finer blending of historical scholarship, creative imagination and literary skill than H. F. M. Prescott."
—NASH K. BURGER,
The New York Times

$5.00 at your bookstore

The Macmillan Company
60 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK 11, N.Y.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

To the Occasional Reader:

There are many ways in which you may have obtained this August 8 issue of The Commonweal. A friend who subscribes may have passed it along, or you may have purchased it in a church vestibule or from a neighborhood newsstand. Perhaps, instead, you are reading this page in a college, school or public library.

In any case here is an auspicious occasion for telling you about The Commonweal's reduced-rate trial subscription offer. We are making this offer in order to enable new readers to become better acquainted with this outspoken journal of opinion, widely quoted in the general American press.

This introductory offer entitles you to thirteen consecutive issues for only two dollars—more than 300 pages of pertinent interpretation and comment on questions of the day at a saving of 38 per cent of the newsstand price. The attached coupon provides a handy way of ordering your trial subscription without delay, or you may as readily send your two dollars with a facsimile.

The Commonweal.

SPECIAL INTRODUCTORY OFFER:
13 ISSUES FOR $2

FOR NEW SUBSCRIBERS ONLY

THE COMMONWEAL, 386 Fourth Ave., New York 16, N. Y.

Enclosed is $2. Please send the next 13 issues of The Commonweal to:

Name .....

Address .....

City ..... Zone ..... State .....

8/8/58

other woman's loving and reluctant arms. The man, eternal optimist, seeks to stop up the relationship with reason just as he plugs the holes in the house.

All three are too busy listening to their own roar to be frightened by anybody's boo. But gradually, the give and take becomes mere jeering and jibing and the circle stops spinning, leaving each paralysed in roles that are not his own: the wife, debilitated and despairing; the husband, object of all love, pure and impure, harried; Edith, playing the wife at one moment, the skullery maid at the next. All this is accepted with a terrible resignation; he who laughs first, weeps at last; and it is made more piercing by protestations of love. Edith sees herself clearly: she is "a tragedienne, sweeping through a role she should have burlesqued."

Miss Shattuck has a flint-like style whose leisurely pace is an illusion. Like Rockville, Kansas where the story unfolds, it only seems to be benevolent. It is extravagant, high-strung, erratic, helter-skelter and pointed. The characters are talky without being chatty and some of the descriptive passages are masterful. But it is the merciless way in which she pursues her trio into their very dreams and introspections that makes the thing come alive, for these are complex people with delicate consciences. Through all their brilliant talk and intellectualized romanticism they lash out more at themselves than at anybody else. They have the power not merely to hurt but to destroy. Their balance is not only delicate but mortally vulnerable. This, Miss Shattuck makes horrifyingly clear.

The characters seem headed for disaster. There is a tragic note when George, whose favorite pastime was taking swipes at hoary heresies, is completely befuddled and his gay and simpler wife ends on the psychiatrist's couch. But it is their friend, Edith, who supplies the key. In an unforgettable episode at the end, a party celebrating the birth of the couple's new baby, an orgy of horror and fantasy, she sees herself as the victim-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

vampire—destroyed and destroying. It is a terrible scene but only the next to last in Miss Shattuck's study of dissolution for it is clear that what has disintegrated was false to start with. Edith does have the strength to get out of the closing circle. And so the author rings down the curtain not so much hopefully, but with a note of energy. A note of energy, I might add, taken on Miss Shattuck's terms, is like a sudden, unexpected shining of the sun with a chorus of "Oh, What a Beautiful Morning."

Welcome to a new novelist who keeps her simplistic inclinations, if she has any, carefully in rein.

Aboard Ship

S. S. SILVERSPRAY. By John Langdon. Macmillan. $3.95.

By THOMAS F. CURLEY

ONE GOOD thing to be said about this book is that it is not arty, and that Mr. Langdon's style, if not distinguished, is not pretentious either. Another good thing is what it tells us about merchant seamen, how they talk, and what they talk about.

The *S. S. Silverspray* sails from San Francisco for Honolulu and Manila. From Frisco to Hawaii, Mr. Langdon spends all of this time laying the ground work for his climax. There is no hero, nor is there any one person through whom the events are presented. Mr. Langdon is more the omnipresent than the omniscient narrator and, while his sudden shifts from one member of the crew to the other may be a bit trying, the method effectively brings each of the crew on stage, if only for a bow.

Soon after leaving Hawaii the *Silverspray* sails into a typhoon and here, for about fifty pages, is much the best writing in the book. "In everyone's consciousness was the great exhausting drone of the wind against the superstructure and in the rigging. The thick cables of the guys and shrouds howled with the scraping clangor of a thousand freight cars being endlessly braked on rusty sidings." The storm provides Mr. Langdon with a unity which he cannot recover when the storm is over.

The rest of the book is not superfluous, Mr. Langdon does have a story to tell, and he tells it economically. But because of his narrative method no one character or personality, not even the author's, dominates the action. Captain Hansmalch is not only a good sailor (in the midst of the storm he directs an ingenious rescue of a man overboard) but a bigoted and brutal man. He hates Negroes; he tortures and murders a young half-crazed Negro, then tries to bribe and intimidate the rest of the crew. But because none of the characters is revealed deeply enough, the story is more a spectacle than an experience. Hansmalch's skill as a sailor is more interesting than his prejudice. Similarly Jason Greer, a Negro and union delegate, whom Hansmalch attempts to bribe, is never anything more than a good man. We know all of the other characters about as well as we know the people we work with every day but never as we know ourselves and those whom we love or hate.

But after all the cavils have been made, much remains to be praised. The dialogue is never obtrusive; it seems authentic. Mr. Langdon can also create a climate, the look and feel of the storms or the heat and humidity of the Philippines. But the day-to-day life on board a ship and the comedy and pathos of men no longer young eagerly awaiting and then drunkenly enjoying their few hours ashore provides opportunities that are not exploited.

REVIEWERS

Marian Seldin, who has previously contributed to The Commonweal, is a free-lance reviewer.

William Dunlea, a regular reviewer, is a New York writer and critic.

Alice Ellen Mayhew reads and analyzes manuscripts on a free-lance basis.

Thomas F. Curley, a frequent contributor, is a novelist and critic.

College of Notre Dame of Maryland
Baltimore 10, Maryland
Conducted by the School Sisters of Notre Dame
Fully Accredited
Program leading to A.B. degree
Arts and Sciences
Teacher Training Pre-Medical
For catalog and further information address the Director of Admissions

CATHOLIC BOOK LISTS showing NEWLY PUBLISHED Catholic Books
CATHOLIC BOOKS IN PRINT
(a cumulative bibliography)
USED and OUT-OF-PRINT Books
Frequently issued and free. Write today.
C. F. PETELLE
Box 289, Maywood, Illinois

Janssen wants to see you!
FAVORITE DINING LANDMARK of N.Y. Since 1898
German American Specialties
Janssen's
Lexington Ave. at 44 St.
Open Daily, exc. Sat. & Sun. During the Summer
LE 2-5661

SUBSCRIPTION ZONE NUMBERS

WHEN SENDING IN changes of address, and new or renewal subscriptions—trial or full year—readers are requested to include zone numbers to comply with Post Office requirements regarding zone numbers.

Classified

Irish Books and Gifts

• Books, Linens, Gifts, Catalogs. IRISH INDUSTRIES DEPOT, INC. 870 Lexington Ave., (near 65th) New York

Distributism

• BOOKS ON DISTRIBUTISM, the Alternative to Capitalism and Communism. For propaganda and price lists write: DAVID HENNESSY, Perkinsville, Vermont.

Sleep Learning

• LEARN WHILE ASLEEP! Exciting details free. Sleep-Learning Research Association. P.O. Box 24-CW, Olympia, Washington.

Advertising

Classified
$1 a line (6 words) two-line minimum

Classified Display
$10.78 per inch (minimum)
Time discounts: 5% for 3 times, 10% for 7 times, 15% for 13 times.
Payable in advance except when ordered through recognized advertising agencies.

The Commonweal
386 Fourth Ave., New York 16, N.Y.
MUrray Hill 3-9685

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

". . . to come together and exchange information"

NATIONAL CATHOLIC CONFERENCE FOR INTERRACIAL JUSTICE

August 29, 30, and 31, 1958 . . . Chicago

For the past year and a half representatives of the Catholic Interracial Council of New York and the Catholic Interracial Council of Chicago have been making plans for a national conference of Catholics active in the field of race relations in the United States. Such a conference will take place in Chicago, August 29th, 30th, and 31st.

The first national Catholic conference will enable representatives of the more than thirty-five Catholic Interracial Councils in the United States to come together and exchange information, and in turn evaluate their growth and development. The conference will also afford Catholics in other allied organizations the opportunity of joining together in serious deliberations with respect to one of the great social problems of our day.

Special Commissions will take up specific problem areas like schools, employment, parochial and institutional life and housing. SPEAKERS INCLUDE: Rev. John LaFarge, S.J., Associate Editor, "America"; Brother Gerald Schnepp, S.M., St. Mary's University, San Antonio, Texas; Dr. John J. O'Connor, Georgetown University, Washington, D.C.; Rev. Thomas Harte, C.SS.R., Catholic University, Washington, D.C.; Elmer A. Carter, Commissioner, New York Commission Against Discrimination; Rev. J. Kenealy, S.J., School of Law, Loyola University, New Orleans.

Everything for twenty-five dollars ($25.00). That's the package being offered delegates. This one fee covers room and board, delegate's reception, conference, banquet and registration fee. Full convention instructions and details will be sent to you on receipt of Registration Blank below.

LOYOLA UNIVERSITY
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

All conference sessions will be held in Loyola Hall, 6551 North Sheridan Road.

(CLIP BLANK BELOW)

REGISTRATION BLANK

PLEASE PRINT

Mr. ☐ Rev. ☐ _____

Mrs. ☐ Miss ☐ _____

Address _____

City _____ Zone _____ State _____

Registration Fee $25.00 per person including room, meals, all seminars, banquet and delegate reception (Thurs. eve., 8:30 p.m.)

Make check payable to "Catholic Interracial Conference"

Please complete and mail to CONVENTION CHAIRMAN, NATIONAL CATHOLIC CONFERENCE FOR INTERRACIAL JUSTICE, 21 W. Superior St., Chicago 10, Ill.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED